

Rural Public Policy and Planning Program

MRP 510: Practicum

Fall 2018

Course time:	6:00-8:40 Fridays
Location:	TED (Office of International Programs)
Instructor:	Kathie Stromile Golden
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Office Hours:	By Appointment

Course description

This course is designed to assist students in making decisions about specialization and internship objectives related to the Master Degree in Rural Public Policy and Planning. The practicum provides students with the opportunity to participate in and observe, as a full-time working member of an agency's staff, the daily policy-related activities of a local, state, or federal government agency, or a non-government agency concerned with the public sector. This course facilitates the development of short and long-term career skills. It entails involvement in a government municipality or other public, private, or not-for-profit agency. The professor and student will locate and acquire a practicum placement site.

Course Objectives

To provide the students with:

- (1) educational research and practical experiences, which will enable them to compete for professional positions in government, business or non-profit organizations,
- (2) essential skills and career related experiences which will assist them in their search for a career in public service, and
- (3) the opportunity to observe first-hand and participate in the dynamics of government, business and non-profit operations and to acquire the knowledge and skills required to conduct said organizations' business efficiently, effectively and productively.

Student Practicum Requirements

Each student is expected to:

- (1) Be regular and punctual in attending the assigned practicum work.
Regular and punctual attendance is required if significant learning is to occur. Absences may be excused by appropriate practicum agency supervisor documentation. Documentation must be presented to the faculty practicum advisor. University policy allows for a reduction in a student's academic grade for excessive absences from practicum site. Excessive absences include unexcused time missed from work at the practicum site.
- (2) Abide by the employment policies of the employer while on the job. Failure to comply with the conditions of employment or attendance requirements (be regular and punctual) is sufficient reason to terminate the practicum without further notice or warning.
- (3) Write and submit a job related project paper to the faculty practicum advisor. The paper should include the student's personal evaluation of the practicum experience. Student must maintain a weekly log to facilitate development of the paper. This must be accomplished before any academic practicum credit is awarded. No grade will be awarded unless the paper is approved.
- (4) Maintain a weekly log/journal (an account or record of work) of activities. This weekly log needs to be emailed to the faculty advisor on a weekly basis and should be signed by the site supervisor.
- (5) The student will work thirty (30) hours per week for a total 420 hours a semester (i.e. 30 hours x 14 weeks).

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- (6) Supervision and the on-site evaluation of the student's work will be provided by the site practicum supervisor. Students will also be involved in a practicum seminar (2) hours per month during the semester to discuss trends and issues relative to the practicum experience.

SUPERVISION:

1. The Practicum Faculty will forward a formal correspondence to confirm the agency's commitment to serve as a MVSU Practicum Placement Suite.
2. Faculty advising will include:
 - A. Practicum Seminar and review of the practicum journal.
 - B. Contacts with practicum site supervisor at least twice per month.
 - One of these should be a site visitation (if the site is within a 50 mile radius of the university).
 - A contact should be made within the first week of the month.
 - A contact should be made within the last week of the month.
3. On-site supervision will include:
 - Orientation by the on-site supervisor - presentation of forms, procedures, policies, and office operations. The supervisor should discuss the philosophy, principles, and rationale of the work of his or her office's services to students. Supervision to include: reviewing the work of the practicum student, giving feedback and guidance.
 - Assignment of appropriate experiences to practicum student consistent in line with program requirements.
 - Communication with the faculty advisor
 - if problems arise.
 - to give feedback on student's progress.
 - Completion and return of the Supervisors Evaluation form.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Students are responsible for the following tasks:

- Keeping a journal of the work experience describing the significant learning acquired during the practicum for the duration of the practicum.
- Submitting the practicum journal for review on weekly basis or as requested by practicum faculty advisor or site supervisor.
- Completing the practicum seminar requirements.
- Completing and submitting an evaluation form.
- **Submitting a practicum paper.** The final paper for the course should integrate practical experience with theoretical explanations (integration of course work and field experience). At a minimum, the paper should include a discussion of:
 - The Agency and its Mission and Operational Structure;
 - Local, State and National Statutes, Laws, Mandates, etc. that impact the Agency's Operational Policies and Procedures;
 - Inter and Intra-Agency Relationships that are critical to effectiveness and efficiency of operations;
 - Challenges and Opportunities confronting the Agency;
 - Organizational Behavior, including the Agency's responsiveness to its constituents;

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Student's assessment of the agency (if problems identified, offer possible solutions), and the impact of the experience on your understanding of organizational behavior and rural public policy.

Please note that the practicum paper is not just a summary of the organization/agency and your weekly tasks, it is more akin to an action research paper. To this end, you are expected to cite relevant literature/research that offers some understanding of how the organization functions (or not function), its structure, culture, etc.

Feedback from the practicum site is essential for the purpose of evaluating student effectiveness.

- The Supervisor Evaluation form is to be completed by the site supervisor to assess the student's performance.
- The completed evaluation form should be returned to the Faculty Advisor no later than two weeks after completion of the practicum.
- Any additional comments the site supervisor wishes to make should be included. Issues or concerns that may arise during the course of practicum may be discussed with the faculty advisor at any time during the academic semester.

GRADING: The following will be utilized in grade calculation:

- | | |
|---|------|
| ➤ Practicum Hours Completed and Weekly Journal: | 30 % |
| ➤ Supervisor's Evaluation: | 20% |
| ➤ Practicum Paper: | 50% |

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APPENDIX A (To be completed BY SUPERVISOR)

MRPP SITE SUPERVISOR INFORMATION SHEET

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Present Position Title _____

Have you supervised College Student Practicum Program in the past?

Yes

No

If yes, when? _____

Who was your faculty contact? _____

Education: (Most recent)

Institution _____

Qualification/Year _____

Other Related Educational Experiences: (Begin with most recent)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Professional Experience: (Begin with most recent)

Employer _____

Employer Address _____

Dates of Employment _____

Job Title _____

Employer _____

Employer Address _____

Dates of Employment _____

Job Title _____

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APPENDIX B (To be completed BY SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT)

MRPP PRACTICUM CONTRACT/MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

SEMESTER: Spring ____ Fall ____ YEAR: _____ COURSE NO: RP 510

NAME: _____

SITE: _____

ADDRESS OF SITE: _____

CITY: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

This Memo of Understanding is entered into between _____ (site supervisor) for _____, practicum student from the Mississippi Valley State University, Rural Public Policy Program as represented by _____, faculty advisor.

The site supervisor agrees to assume responsibility for assisting the practicum student in performing functions, duties, and activities related to his/her practicum experience. These experiences are here defined between the student and the Rural Public Policy Program and are agreed to by the site supervisor. The faculty advisor agrees to be available for consultation with the site supervisor either personally or by phone and to make on-site visits as deemed necessary by the student's progress.

Site supervisor agrees to:

- 1) Provide the student with appropriate duties, activities, responsibilities, and experiences.
- 2) Provide supervision for the student.
- 3) Complete the Student Evaluation Form and communicate same to student as a final feedback on the progress of the student.
- 4) Be available for conferences with the student and/or faculty advisor.
- 5) Provide the student with adequate physical facilities and resources with which to work.
- 6) Other (Please state) _____

Student agrees to:

- 1) Act in a manner consistent with agency or professional Code of Ethics.
- 2) Be responsible for completing required hours at the practicum site.
- 3) Be available to the site supervisor for conferences (e.g., staffing, consultation, etc.)
- 4) Keep a journal of experience.
- 5) Comply with rules and regulations at the site (e.g., report writing, in-service training, staff meetings, etc.)
- 6) Other (please state) _____.

Site Supervisor's Signature and Date

Student's Signature and Date

APPENDIX C (To be completed and emailed BY SUPERVISOR)

MRPP EVALUATION FOR STUDENT PRACTICUM

Semester/Year _____
Student Name _____
Student Address _____
Site Supervisor Name _____
Site Address _____
Phone _____

Please indicate the degree each competency has been demonstrated using the following scale:

- 5. This was done most of the time with a very high degree of competence.
- 4. This was done much of the time with a high degree of competence.
- 3. This was done sometimes with an adequate degree of competence.
- 2. This was done occasionally with a relatively low level of competence.
- 1. This was rarely demonstrated or done with an extremely low level of competence.
- N/A Not Applicable

I. Knowledge

- 1. Demonstrated an understanding of the mission and goals of the office.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 2. Demonstrated knowledge of office operations, rules, regulations, and policies.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 3. Demonstrated understanding of the office's relationship with other departments of the institution.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 4. Demonstrated understanding of the administrative and managerial responsibilities of the office.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 5. Demonstrated understanding of the relationship between theory and actual practice in the practicum.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 6. Demonstrated knowledge of current trends, issues, and problem areas related to office operations.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 7. Demonstrated understanding of legal and ethical responsibilities.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 8. Demonstrated understanding of group process.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 9. Demonstrated ability to state a personal philosophy on the theory and practical applications of college student affairs.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A

II. Skills

- 1. Proficiency in carrying out assignments and responsibilities.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 2. Organizational and managerial skills as appropriate to assigned duties.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 3. Consultative group processing and team building skills as appropriate to assigned duties.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 4. Written and oral expression.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 5. Program planning skills as appropriate to assigned duties.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 6. Analytical, decision-making, and evaluative abilities.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 7. Self-evaluative skills (based on informal discussions and midterm summary report).
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 8. Leadership skills as appropriate to assigned duties.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A

III. Attitudes

- 1. Demonstrated initiative, commitment, and conscientiousness in performing duties.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 2. Demonstrated courtesy, discretion, and cooperativeness when working with others.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 3. Respects deadlines and due dates in carrying out responsibilities.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 4. Punctually attends work and meetings.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A

IV. Values

- 1. Adhered to ethical standards.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 2. Demonstrated sensitivity to individual and cultural differences.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A
- 3. Demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to the profession.
5 4 3 2 1 N/A

V. Overall Potential

How would you assess the practitioner's potential for future work in this profession?

VI. Additional Comments (use back of sheet if necessary)

Site Supervisor's Signature and Date

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APPENDIX D (To be completed BY STUDENT)

MRPP PRACTICUM PLACEMENT EVALUATION

Student's Name _____ Course No. RP 510
Semester: Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer ___ Year _____
Practicum Site (Institution & Office) _____
Site Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Site Phone _____
Type of Clientele _____ Site Supervisor _____

- A. Please rate your site based on the following statements from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good.)
1. Adequate assistance in meeting student's learning objectives.
2. Staff acceptance of student as an agency's trainee.
3. Support and cooperation of the administrative staff.
4. Adequacy of physical facilities.
5. Flexibility of site (functional area) in meeting practicum student's needs.
6. Site requirements were reasonable.
7. Overall evaluation of functional area as practicum site.

- B. Please rate your site supervisor on the following areas from 1 (seldom) to 5 (often).
1. Supervisor offered constructive criticism.
2. Supervisor provided support when needed.
3. Supervisor provided assistance or referred student to someone who could.
4. Supervisor allowed adequate time for individual supervision.
5. Supervisor helped student integrate theory and practice.
6. Overall evaluation of supervision.

- C. Recommendations
1. Would you recommend this site to students in the future?
2. What changes/recommendations/modifications do you have for this site or the assigned duties?
3. What functional areas or duties would you recommend students experience at this site in the future?
4. In what ways has this experience impacted or enhanced your career goals?

Additional Comments: